DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 344 JC 980 291

AUTHOR Newberry, Sheila
TITLE Teaching as a Performing Art.
INSTITUTION Saint Petersburg Junior Coll., FL.
PUB DATE 1996-10-00
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Teaching/Learning Conference (Ashland, KY, October 10-11, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Comparative Analysis; *Instructional Innovation; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; Teaching Conditions; Teaching Guides; *Teaching Methods; Teaching Skills; *Teaching Styles; Theater Arts; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

This paper encourages teachers to consider teaching as a performing art. By using the theater as a metaphor for effective, innovative instructional methods, the author parallels various aspects of performing arts with various aspects of teaching. The "stage" represents the classroom and "sets" the teaching environment; the "set" characterizes the classroom and determines whether it's conducive to learning. A class must have appropriate "props," or teaching materials, in order to function properly. The "curtain," which covers a stage, represents negative attitudes or conflict in the classroom and must be avoided to encourage an open environment of ethics. Every "play" has "leading actors," or star students, who set the "stage" for the rest of the class, as well as a "supporting cast," those students who do not openly demonstrate such apt learning. The "playwright" represents the curriculum used. The curriculum must be up-to-date, understandable, and applicable to the objectives of the class. The teacher plays the role of the "director," working to nurture and develop the inner abilities of the students, and the "script" provides the game plan and is the guideline for how information will be presented. The class must be varied and entertaining, including such techniques as games, art, music, humor, dramatics, and technology. (YKH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 420 344

Teaching as a Performing Art

Sheila Newberry

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Newberry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JC 980 291

"Welcome to the Mid-day Matinee. I hope that you have your ticket And that you have found a comfortable seat. I would like for you to Join me in a presentation of "*Teaching as a Performing Art.*" It's one of the latest and greatest shows to make the educational circuit. Or, so I've been told. Well no sense of waiting, let the show begin!"

Teaching today has become quite a challenge. We as teachers must compete daily with video games, MTV, E-mail, Internet, computer programs, advertising campaigns, the Mall, and even Info-mercials. What an unbelievable task we have assigned ourselves! Don't you ask yourself sometimes, "Why do I do this?" What drives me so hard? It always boils down to the same answer. We care about learning. We care about students. We care that students' learn. "The sole justification of teaching, of the school itself, is that the student comes out of it able to do something he could not do before. I say do and not know, because knowledge that doesn't lead to doing something new or doing something better is not knowledge at all" (Barzun 1991).

In my field of study, Health Information Management, I use a variety of techniques during my classroom presentations. Each week of a semester will always offer the students a variety of presentation options. I'm sure the topic, "Teaching as a Performing Art," has as many connotations or interpretations as there are people reading this article. However, I'd like to tell you how I feel about teaching and what I've observed over the past fifteen years. I want to extend to you a Special Invitation to explore with me my various views on teaching and learning. I will also introduce you to multiple teaching techniques. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

The Stage

It represents our classroom and sets the mood for learning. It prepares us for our environment. Is it organized, well lit, inviting, pleasant, too hot, too cold, or colorful?

The Set

It characterizes our classroom. Is the set functional and appropriate for the learning process? Is it comfortable and workable? Does it have adequate furniture and wheelchair access? Is it a safe place for our students to work and learn? Many students are threatened by the educational "atmosphere" that surrounds our, so called, hallowed halls.

Props

Have you ever been to a play and right in the middle of a crucial scene a very important prop is missing? It can severely hurt the performance. The same thing can happen in our classrooms. One missing piece of equipment or resource can be just as detrimental to your teaching as was the prop to the plot of the play. Is there appropriate equipment to complete the desired task? Does each classroom have an overhead projector, chalkboards, resource materials, textbooks, computers, printers, headphones, desks, and chairs? The last two items are essential!

Curtain

A curtain covers a stage. The curtain covers a multitude of sins. They are present in every classroom. These are the areas you want to avoid, such as mistrust, hatred, insecurity, fear, and prejudice. This could be conflict between students, students and teachers, or groups within the class. "Ethics must be seen to be believed, and school life is full of situations in which decent, generous, even noble actions can take place and be known to all so as to be felt as *the right thing to do*. Ethics is not talk but action (Byham 1992).

Leading Actors

How could we teach without our leading actors? Each classroom has at least one. They are the class leaders, the Stars. He/she shapes the atmosphere of the whole classroom. They set the stage for the rest of the class. They are the students that are easily identifiable as to their capabilities and their learning styles.

Supporting Cast

Then there are their comrades, the supporting cast. I call them the "mystery" students. They are not so easily identifiable. They are the quiet student, the disruptive student, and the late student. They give NO indication HOW they learn or IF they learn. They are the forgotten students who often get lost in the educational shuffle.

The Playwright

The playwright represents the curriculum you are using. Is it up-to-date? Is it understandable and applicable to your objectives for the class? Is it written for the appropriate grade level? Or, is it just convenient? No new lesson plans - no new syllabus – I've go it made!

The Director

You, the teacher, are the director. You work to nurture and develop the inner abilities of the students. Your duties include being a coach, a mentor, and a facilitator. As the leader, you determine how you will conduct your class and where you will place the emphasis. You must explain the purpose and importance of what you are trying to teach, the process to be used, and show how it's done. One should observe the person practicing the process and provide immediate and specific feedback (Byham 1992). Unless educators make sound decisions based on sound evidence and abandon some of the old, untested, traditional teaching practices, outside agencies will make decisions for colleges that could have serious and damaging consequences (Milton 1973).

Script

The script serves as your game plan. It is your guideline for study. Items that make up your script are the syllabus, tests, handouts, lesson plans, goals, and objectives. Keeping the script current and accurate is an ongoing process. This will make the presentation better each time. It is a continuous three-step process of read, study, and revise – READ, STUDY and REVISE.

Be inventive with your script. Vary your script. When choosing a book to read, you want variety so should there be variety in your selection of classroom presentation modes. Use lectures, labs, games, audio, video, role-playing, case studies, and so on.

According to documented research, students learn:

10% of what they read
20% of what they hear
30% of what they see and hear
70% of what they discuss with others
80% of what they experience personally
95% of what they teach to someone else (Nolan 1996)

Because of this diversity, this is where your creativity comes alive. This is my favorite part about teaching. I can use art, games, music, drama, technology, and humor or all of these combined to try and reach all learning styles to make learning easier and more fun for ALL students. Each student is unique. Learning styles are how students prefer to learn or are predisposed to learn (Dunn and Dunn 1978). Teachers usually instruct in ways that are consistent with their own individual learning styles. Teachers tend to teach as they were taught (Sandholtz, Ringstaff, and Dwyer 1997). I, myself, learn in various

ways, thus I use various techniques. I'd like to share with you some examples of activities I've developed to use with my students.

Games

Games are useful in teaching teamwork, self-expression, problem solving, and decision-making (Strommen 1995). Examples of games that I use are Med-Dominoes, Jeopardy, QI Koosh-Ball, Basketball Darts, and Tic-Tac-Throw. These are all variations on commercially produced games. I have adjusted each game into a team format so that all classmates can play at once. Jeopardy, for instance, is made on two sheets (3' x 4') of art board. Self-sticking plastic cup hooks are arranged on the board in row and columns. The top hook in each row is for the category, followed by five hooks for each of the values (100, 200, 300, 400, 500). I also made each column's cards a different color so it would be visually appealing and easier to read. The game is played just like the commercial version other than it is played in teams. Teams have colored banners, which they must hold and stand to be recognized to answer a question. It is a great way to review material for a mid-term or final exam.

Art

As part of their end of class group projects, students draw and illustrate posters and charts. Only one group member is responsible for this portion of the project and most groups have one individual who really can excel in this field.

Music

Music, so the saying goes, can soothe the savage beast. I have used music during class periods for several different activities. Play it as students enter the classroom. Play it as an attention rouser at the beginning of class, or during group work where the noise level tends to rise. You'll find if you play music in the background, the noise level will drop. We, as educators, don't usually give students the opportunity to be creative. I have students create new words to

familiar tunes. They choose the song they wish to use. Some examples are Old MacDonald, The Mickey Mouse Theme Song, and Yesterday. The songs, with their new lyrics, deal with some aspect of our curriculum and are again presented as part of a group project. Vary the types of music used from classical to rock. It's interesting to see and hear the differences in the responses of the students to each type.

Humor

Everyone loves to laugh, even students! Cartoons can be another way to let students express themselves. They can be used to initiate conversation or discuss topics being studied. It is most helpful when discussing sensitive issues. However, humor must be used cautiously and gently. The intent is not to insult anyone or enter into topics that are too personal or emotional. However, students can sometimes reach out and respond to comments or issues if presented in a light, non-threatening manner.

Dramatics

Workplace simulations as well as individual and group presentations allow students to portray themselves in various ways. Role-playing is another great way to express one's feelings or ideas. These "what-if" situations make excellent critical thinking exercises. Jeff Sonnenfeld of the Center for Leadership and Career Studies at Emory University says that they use role-playing all the time. "When you jump into another person's world view, you can better discover your own weak links"(USA TODAY 1997) Role-playing is an excellent way to have students experience situations which are unfamiliar to them. It gives them the opportunity to look at a problem from a new perspective. Some students are very hesitant to participate, but I have found that a Prop Box is a helpful tool.

A Prop Box is nothing more than a box that holds props. Very original! The props do not have to be expensive items or even specially purchased items. The props are any items that would help the individual feel more comfortable in the role they are playing. Some props will be personal (glasses, hat, perfume, etc.). Other props will be dependent on the role (work tools, cooking utensils, etc.). No scientific proof, but I have found through years of observations that people do a much better, more relaxed job in their role-playing exercises, if they have props.

Technology

Today computer technology is essential. It offers hands-on experiences, immediate feedback capabilities, fosters independent study, develops technical skills, and prepares students for future employment opportunities. Students have a higher degree of social awareness and self-confidence; they are more independent and display more positive attitudes about learning and themselves; they are able to experiment and problem solve with greater ease; they themselves serve as collaborators and experts; and they have a positive orientation about the future (Apple Computer 1991).

Audience/Critics

Your audience is very important to the success of your teaching. They will make you or break you. They are individuals such as your students, your peers, alumni, and the administration. Your critics will analyze your every move, whether good or bad. And they will be made up of the same individuals as your audience. Critics are powerful! They can shut the show in one night or make you into an overnight success! You must be strong and hold to your beliefs if you feel your teaching techniques are valuable and worthwhile for the student's progress and enjoyment of learning.

Ticket

A good evaluation is your student's ticket to success. Creativity can be your ticket to successful teaching by daring to be different, innovative and inspiring. Students will thank you for your interest and love of teaching. It will show through the job that you do.

Applause

A reward should be given for an excellent performance. Rewards for processing information and responding correctly can not only spark people's interest, but can maintain their interest throughout the class. A reward table or box can be used to applaud and individuals correct response to questions.

The End

I hope that this article can inspire someone to go for the gusto! Be creative; be daring, be willing to do the unconventional. Someday I hope that this type of teaching will be the norm, not the scorned.

You've been a great audience. I hope that you enjoyed the show. Have a great teaching career, and remember this simple concept:

Sell em'

Show em'

Coach em'

Teach em'

References

Apple Computer. (1991). *Apple classrooms of tomorrow: Philosophy and structure and what's happening where.* ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED 340349.

Barzun, J. (1991). *Begin Here: The Forgotten Conditions of Teaching and Learning.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Byham, W. (1992). *Zapp! In Education.* New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Dunn, R. and K. Dunn. (1978). *Teaching students through their individual learning styles: A practical approach.* Reston, VA: Reston.

Milton, O. (1973). *Alternatives to the Traditional.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Nolan, T. (1996). *Learning Styles.* Speaker notes from In-Service Day. St. Petersburg Junior College.

Sandholtz, J, C. Ringstaff and D. Dwyer. (1997). *Teaching with Technology: Creating Student-Centered Classrooms.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

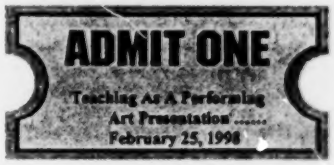
Strommen, E. (1995). Cooperative Learning: Technology may be the Trojan horse that brings collaboration into the classroom. *Electronic Learning* 14(4): 24-35.

USA TODAY. (September 1997). Role-Playing can be all business. [On-line], Available: http://www.usatoday.com/life/enter/books/leb486.htm.

TEACHING AS A PERFORMING ART

SHEILA NEWBERRY
ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE

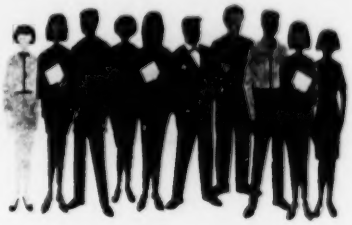
TICKET



WHAT A CHALLENGE !

- Video games
- MTV
- E-mail and Internet
- Computer programs
- Advertising campaigns
- Mall
- Info-mercials

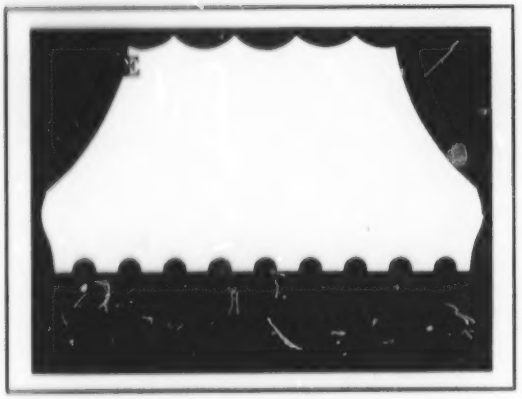
WHY DO I DO THIS ??



HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

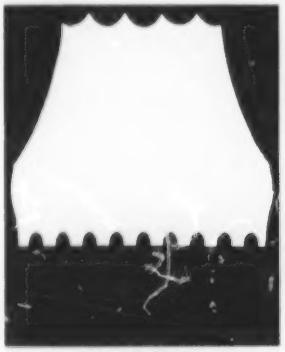
- Medical Statistics
- Medical Terminology
- Quality Assurance
  - QI
  - Risk Management
  - Utilization Review
- Management
- In-House Professional Practice Experience

A SPECIAL INVITATION



Our classroom environment is the STAGE !

- Organized
- Well lit
- Inviting
- Pleasant
- Too hot
- Too cold
- Colorful

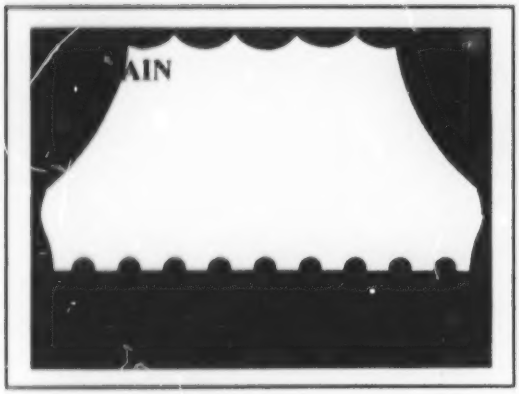


Is the SET appropriate for the learning process ?

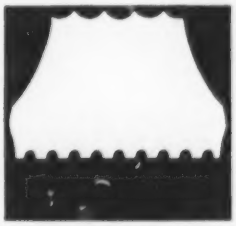
- Comfortable
- Workable
- Adequate furniture
- Wheelchair accessible
- Timely

- Overhead Projectors
- Chalkboards
- Resource Materials
- Textbooks
- Computers
- Printers
- Headphones
- Desks
- Chairs

PROPS - Is there appropriate equipment to complete the desired task?



CURTAIN - It covers a multitude of sins.
These are present in every classroom.
These are areas you want to avoid.



- Mistrust
- Hatred
- Insecurity
- Fear
- Prejudice

LEADING ACTORS

- Each classroom has one.
- The class leaders.

- He/she shapes the atmosphere of the whole classroom.
- They set the stage for the rest of the class.
- The student that is easily identifiable as to their capabilities and their learning style.

SUPPORTING CAST

- ☑ They are not so easily identifiable.
- ☑ Quiet student
- ☑ Disruptive student
- ☑ Late student

These students give NO indication HOW they learn or IF they learn

PLAYWRIGHT

PLAYWRIGHT - represents the curriculum you are using.

- Is it up-to-date?
- Is it understandable?
- Is it applicable to your objectives for the class?
- Is it written for the appropriate grade level?
- OR.... IS IT JUST CONVENIENT?

DIRECTOR

YOU are the DIRECTOR!

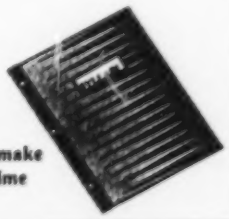
- Nurture and develop the inner abilities
- Facilitator
- Coach
- Mentor
- Leader - you determine how you will conduct your class - and where you will put the emphasis.

SCRIPT

SCRIPT - these are your guidelines

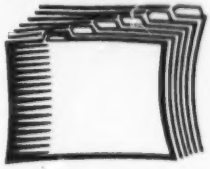
- Syllabus
- Tests
- Handouts
- Lesson Plans
- Goals
- Objectives
- Read, Study, Revise

This is an ongoing process to make the presentation better each time it's given!



BE INVENTIVE - vary your SCRIPT

- Thriller
- Love story
- Sci-Fi
- Biography
- Comedy
- Musical



Students want to see and experience a little bit of everything! And they learn in many different ways.

According to documented research, students learn:

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see and hear
- 70% of what they discuss with others
- 80% of what they experience personally
- 95% of what they teach to someone else

Because of this diversity, this is where your creativity comes alive !!!

GAMES

They are useful in teaching team work, self expression, problem-solving, and decision-making.

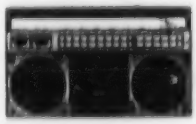
- MED-DOMINOES
- JEOPARDY
- KOOSH-BALL
- BASKETBALL DARTS
- TIC-TAC-THROW

ART

- POSTERS
- CHARTS

MUSIC

- ORIGINAL SONGS
- SONG TITLES PERTAINING TO SUBJECT MATTER
- BACKGROUND MUSIC FOR STUDY GROUPS



THE GASTRO-MANIACAL PROMENADE AND OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAY

Now it's time to say good-bye to all our gastric woes,

IND - IGE - STION

If you feel you haven't learned a thing we've said today,

Carry on, fill your face, you're the one who'll pay !

Taco Bell, KFC, and all the other things we love to eat.....

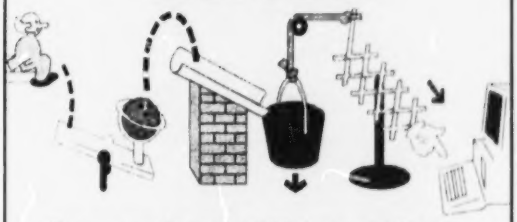
With this song we've done our best

To enlighten those who care

Tape your mouth, lock the fridge, push away your chair !

IND - IGE - STION

HUMOR



Cartoons can be used to initiate conversation or discuss topics being studied. It is most helpful when discussing sensitive issues.

DRAMATICS

- ROLE PLAYING
- WORKPLACE SIMULATIONS

- CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS
- GROUP PRESENTATIONS

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

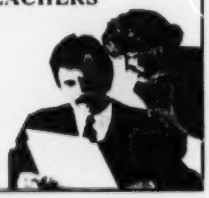
- HANDS ON
- IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK CAPABILITIES
- FOSTERS INDEPENDENT STUDY
- DEVELOPS TECHNICAL SKILLS
- PREPARES STUDENT FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AUDIENCE

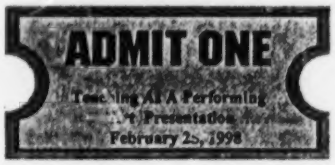
- STUDENTS
- PEERS
- ALUMNI
- ADMINISTRATION

THEY WILL BE EVERYWHERE !!

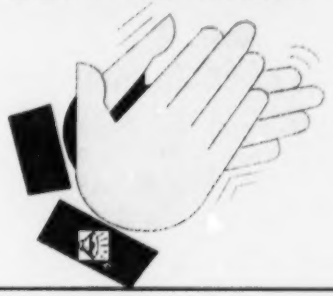
- ADMINISTRATION
- PEERS
- STUDENTS
- TEACHERS
- COMMUNITY
  - Advisory Committee
  - Facility-Site Supervisors
  - Alumni



TICKET



APPLAUSE



THANK YOU !

THE END !

TEACHING AS A PERFORMING ART

SHEILA NEWBERRY
ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE